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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 000028

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [GT](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN EFFORTS TO SECURE UNSC SEAT

REF: STATE 2107

Classified By: Ambassador Derham; Reason 1.4 (d)

1. (C) Summary: Guatemala's efforts to secure a United Nations Security Council seat are well underway. Foreign Minister Jorge Briz welcomed USG support and looks forward to a visit by Department of State officials to coordinate lobbying activities. Within the hemisphere, Briz foresees the need for extensive lobbying with Belize, Jamaica, and Panama, in addition to South American countries that may feel obligated to vote for Venezuela. End summary.

2. (U) Foreign Minister Jorge Briz, Guatemalan Ambassador to the United Nations Jorge Skinner-Klee, and Vice Minister Carlos Ramiro Martinez met with Ambassador and Poloff January 4 to discuss Guatemala's bid for Latin America's seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). We reviewed orally the talking points and meeting schedule provided reftel and also left non-papers.

3. (U) Briz told us that he and President Berger had already begun an extensive lobbying campaign for the seat under Ministry for Foreign Relations (MRE) coordination. Briz added that he was aided in this effort by former-Foreign Minister Maritza de Vielmann (an expert in the UN system and in international law), Gert Rosenthal (former Guatemalan Representative to the Organization of American States), and Julio Martini, Guatemalan Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, who is also accredited to several other Caribbean states.

Impressions Thus Far

4. (C) Briz told us that informal vote counts look promising, but he recognized that professed support is unreliable at this early stage. The Central American states are generally supportive, but he suggested that there is a perceived schism between Central and South America. Several South American countries -- notably Bolivia, Brazil, and probably Ecuador -- will feel obligated to support Venezuela, and will pressure others to do so.

5. (C) The Guatemalans hope that the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) member states will not vote as a bloc, as they believe the CARICOM would probably vote for Venezuela due to Venezuela's own influence, plus that of Cuba. Briz noted that the key problem states in the hemisphere were Belize (due to the Caribbean connection and traditional tension with Guatemala), Jamaica (due to a standard leftist attitude in the UN; Briz suggested that the Jamaicans "need someone to tussle with the U.S. on the Security Council"), and Panama, who, according to Briz, have agreed to support Venezuela for the UNSC seat in return for Venezuelan support for Panama as the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) Secretariat site.

6. (C) Briz volunteered that a potential trading chip for Guatemala would be its vote on Cuba at the Geneva UNHRC session this spring. On the merits, Guatemala would vote against Cuba and would consult with the U.S. before changing that position, but it might be something to consider in the context of the UNSC campaign.

7. (C) In response to our questions, Briz said he believed that they already had Mexican President Fox and Colombian President Uribe on board, but that they were still working on Chilean President Lagos. Briz had spoken with a friend who is a good contact of both Lagos and Chile's likely incoming President, so the Guatemalans are hopeful.

8. (C) Briz believed that Europe and Asia (with the exception of China) are probably supportive of Guatemala. The vote, they feel, may come down to the choice of the Africans. Reviewing a list of upcoming international meetings, Briz suggested that Rosenthal visit Khartoum for the African Union meeting and possibly visit Guatemalan troops serving as peacekeepers in the Congo as well. Briz said that President Berger intends to visit Europe to lobby for support and de Vielmann will travel extensively in the Western Hemisphere and elsewhere. Skinner-Klee noted that the Venezuelan Ambassador had done little lobbying in New York, indicating that Venezuela is concentrating efforts in the capitals.

Comment

19. (C) The Guatemalans' efforts are better coordinated than we had imagined. Their plans tallied closely with our suggestions and, where they did not, Briz was eager to take our analysis. For that reason, Briz noted that he would welcome a visit by Dibble and Brencick on January 16. Indeed, Briz hoped the visitors might be able to make suggestions regarding appropriate lobbying materials in each of the UN languages.
DERHAM